

THOUGHTS ABOUT CRIMINOLOGY*

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The Individual Psychologist sees the delinquent (criminal) as an individual. There are as many types as there are individuals. It is unscientific and unwise to lump all delinquents into a single group. As every well-trained Individual Psychologist would suspect, each delinquent represents a unique integration of his unique experiences and background. And one must be very cautious when one attempts to generalize about the delinquent personality.

There are, however, certain common elements in the delinquent's background which can be identified. In one of the most thorough studies of this problem, "New Sights on Delinquency," Healy and Bronner concluded that the delinquent's background is one of frustration and that the delinquent did not get the same emotional satisfaction out of his school activities and social contacts as his non-delinquent sibling. Individual Psychologists have long recognized this typical background of maladjustment--exaggerated insecurity attended by self-centeredness and lack of social participation. This immediately tells us that delinquency is merely another form of personal maladjustment and must be treated accordingly.

The criminal's background is that of an individual weighed down by insecurity and discouragement, who finds frustration in those activities that yield some degree of satisfaction to the normal child. This feeling of frustration exaggerates his needs for security and ego expression. The pressure of this need demands an immediate answer. And the criminal finds his answer by substituting personal concepts of superiority for acceptable social concepts. Whereas, in normal development the need for security expresses itself in greater class-room striving and in greater

social participation and social competition, in the criminal the very pressure of the need demands immediate and more readily attainable satisfaction. Due to his inadequate development and discouraged attitude the criminal finds the normal channels of expression unsatisfying and frustrating. And instead of using the passive withdrawal mechanism of the neurotically inclined individual he utilizes aggressive and active means of securing substitute satisfactions.

The criminal is usually the product of a home that failed to yield the affection and security that is necessary for the child's best development. Too frequently, parental harshness and dominance engenders hostility, fear and aggression in the child's mind and feelings. Then there are the countless other types of homes that similarly fail to give the child the security and confidence that it requires if it is to compete with other children in the usual areas of childhood. The pampering and over-protecting home which deprives the child of the opportunity to develop adequate initiative and independence to compete on equal terms outside the home; the home in which the child feels the subtle but sharp demands of the ambitious parent, or the failure to measure up to the success of an unusual sibling. These and many other homes deprive a child of the security and the confidence that shield it from frustration. Then of course there are those homes that are characterized by parental discord, drunkenness and vice. These homes make primary and direct contributions to the formation of the delinquent.

Once the substitute pattern of securing satisfaction has been developed, the intelligence is used to rationalize the substitute criminal behavior. The end product who appears in our courts and is subsequently incarcerated, has his own set of values. He moves in a hostile and unfriendly world that wars against him and threat-

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ens to reform him. One thing that experience should have taught us is that one cannot demand that the neurotic cease his anxiety, the psychotic his fantasizing, the criminal his hostility. The re-education of the criminal demands that he be met with friendliness and patience. The typical criminal scorns our efforts to re-educate him. It is like asking him to cravenly admit his worthlessness. We must not expect him to give up his pattern of behavior before we can substitute satisfactions and values that he is ready to accept. In most cases the educator represents a bridge of friendliness between the delinquent's suspicious hostility and the social world. The teacher becomes the first social contact for the inmate. One might ask how many teachers are prepared and fitted to play this role.

And one might further ask: How does the prison, the reformatory, proceed to the difficult task of liquidating the delinquent's hostility and eliciting in its place a feeling of friendliness and social belonging. I wonder. Furthermore, I do not think that these institutions are organized to serve such a purpose. In the final analysis, the heavy cement, the tool-proof steel, the officer with his shining badge, are all concrete living embodiments of the authority against which the delinquents

war. Then, you can justly say that such institutions aggravate the delinquent's hostility and do as much harm as good. With this statement I must agree. Only I must caution you not to be too severe with the prison official. He is an expression of the same blunted society which the delinquent reflects. Both express the same shortcoming of a society of which we are all a part.

Why should we expect of a prison institution practices which are still foreign to our broadly spread democratic educational system? Only after the school assumes its responsibility can we expect the prison to do likewise.

Dr. Adler reiterated the need of establishing child guidance clinics in the public school system. The need for these clinics is obvious. The school maladjusted are more amenable to treatment than the prison maladjusted.

In conclusion all I can say is that all the problems of society are related, just as the problems of any individual are closely related. Growth in one direction will express itself in all other directions. What we need is a society that accepts the philosophy of social responsibility and cooperation.

BOOK REVIEW

Corrective Treatment for Unadjusted Children - By: Nahum E. Shoobs and George Goldberg. Publishers: Harper & Brothers, New York & London 1942 \$3.00

This book, which fills a vital need in the field of education, is divided into two parts: Principles and Practice, written by N. E. Shoobs, and Manual for Teachers, written by George Goldberg. For the training of teachers in understanding disturbing pupils and in "guiding normal children with personality problems to goals of successful living," the authors prefer the Adlerian method, because, "first, the therapeutics of Freud and Jung are entirely too delicate and too involved to be

entrusted to any one but a highly trained professional psychiatrist; second, Americans with or without training in psychology and mental hygiene will find much that is familiar; for Adler's work particularly with children is so grounded in common sense and common experience that its principles and practices can be grasped by the average intelligent teacher." Besides that, this method has been proven successful by European and American teachers.

Shoobs points out in the first chapter on Our Aims and Objectives that "seldom, and in few places have personality disturbances been attacked in such an organized and scientific fashion as are